United Nations

Press Release

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Economic and Social Council calls for continued sanctions against South Africa pending evidence of "irreversible change"; seeks urgent humanitarian aid to Somalia.

- Special Commission monitoring destruction of Iraq's weapons returns to New York from first on-site inspection of nuclear facilities in Iraq.

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The Economic and Social Council this morning called on Governments to maintain existing sanctions against South Africa until there was "clear evidence of profound and irreversible change" there. The South African Government was called upon to exercise its responsibility to end the violence in the country.

The Council took that action as it adopted a resolution on the implementation of the Programme of Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

The Council, acting without a vote on a resolution concerning emergency assistance to Somalia, urged Somalia's national leaders to do their utmost to bring about national reconciliation and to promote peace and stability throughout the country.

The Council also called on the Secretary-General urgently to mobilize international humanitarian assistance for the immediate needs both of displaced persons and refugees still in the country and to dispatch an inter-agency mission there to assess its emergency and medium-term needs.

Also this morning, a draft resolution concerning the "United States economic embargo against Cuba" was circulated in the Council. By that draft, the Council would request the Commission on Human Rights to consider the adverse effects which the embargo and "other aggressive and discriminatory actions taken against" Cuba by the United States have on the enjoyment by the Cuban people of their inalienable human rights. The draft resolution is sponsored by Cuba.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

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Members of the Special Commission and of the Secretariat who took part in the first on-site inspection of nuclear facilities in Iraq last week have returned to New York. A United Nations spokesman said today that the team was currently briefing the Commission's Executive Chairman, Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, and other members.

The spokesman went on to say that Ambassador Ekeus planned to leave for Vienna today to meet with the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Hans Blix. He would then travel to Bahrain where the Special Commission was establishing a field office, and afterwards to Baghdad for consultations with Iraqi authorities.

The spokesman said the Commission's five-member working unit on nuclear disarmament was meeting all this week in New York and had been joined by four nuclear-weapons experts from France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union, recruited for this stage of the unit's work. The experts were to advise the Special Commission on materials, items and activities proscribed by Security Council resolution 687 (1991). An IAEA representative was also participating in ongoing discussions.

The spokesman added that plans were under way for a 35-member team of chemical-weapons experts from eight Member States to conduct their first on-site inspection of a chemical weapons facility in Iraq. They were expected to arrive in that country on 9 June.

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